177. Villager .. Short story.
53 Are we seeing aright? .. Attack on prolonged nat-festivals at
204 pagodas, as endangering physical
538 and moral welfare of people, including attack on worldly members of monkhood.

• 541 Horse-racing in Rangoon was a foreign importation, but nevertheless
177. the stadium was always filled, not only with the fashionable section in an
54 enclosure but also with rows of four-anna spectators who had been col-
369 lected from all the streets of the town by the privately-run Burmese buses which tore along on race days, with two "spares" (spare-men in addition to the driver) hanging out from the back step and shouting to all they passed: "Race-a-ko, Race-a-ko! Race-course, race-course." But in the country the traditional boat racing was still alive. Boat races were held in every village which had a stream or river, as an annual event after the Lenten season. Long narrow canoes built in the village itself were rowed by twenty-two men and put out in rivalry between quarter and quarter, or between one village and another. At Ye the upper street and lower street put out boats bearing names of prowess or aquatic grace. The cheering and betting raged more furious and wild with the manner of the finish: the winning post was a boat in the centre of the stream, equidistant from the tracks of each boat, and across this was laid a hollow cane sticking about three feet out on either side. Through the hollow was thrust the prize *pan:* flower (of victory), a stick with a flag on each end. The winning crew was to seize this flower before it could be called victorious, and thus a dead-heat often sent both crews tumbling into the water as they wrestled for the prize.

525 Burmans are said to have an irrepressible gambling spirit, even when no money is laid on. A stock example quoted by foreigners of the Burman's readiness with a dah in his hot temper, gives as provocation the anger worked up between two men who sit idly in a tea-shop, and for lack of amusement bet on the number of flies which will settle on the sugar bowl. I prefer the story of two street urchins, who saw two monks walking before them, sedately, with downcast eyes and steady pace, as monks should walk. "Look," says one idle urchin, "there are two hpongyis. You look at the one on the right, I'll watch the one the left. I bet you my hpongyi walks faster than your hpongyi." The monks ignore this, but soon begin to hear: "My holiness is going faster!" "No' mind!" Unobtrusively, each hpongyi tries to walk quicker and yet with dignity. The boys get thoroughly excited now. "*My* holiness!', "No, *my* holiness!" Soon the astonished spectators see two hpongyis

Z:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma (Karen) AP1
Burmese AP4

Be
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dogs with their uninflectional, agglutinative barking. They sleep most of the day, and at night gather together in bands and do their best to make up for the want of jackals in Burma. There is always a huge band of unattached dogs about the village, for Buddhism does not permit of the drowning of superfluous puppies, and these manage to lead a fairly well-fed life between stealing and devouring the offerings at the pagoda, and the superabundant charity received by the monks in their morning begging rounds. It is a mystery how they managed formerly to exist in Mandalay and Upper Burma generally; there were such constantly increasing hordes of them. Nowadays the Assistant Commissioner periodically issues an edict, and poisoned meat and the policemen's truncheons thin out their numbers very thoroughly for a month or two. The house-dog often perishes with his Bohemian acquaintances, and there is much lamentation among the younger members of the household, but there is no difficulty in getting a successor, grown up or otherwise. The ordinary pariah has a greater turn for agility than pluck, and the young civilian's English bull-dog would probably kill more of them, when he is on a tour to the outlying villages with his master, than he actually does, if he was as smart on his legs as he is with his jaws. The pariah is almost as noisy and quarrelsome as a Madrasi, but any fights there are result as harmlessly as a French duel. Nevertheless some of the Karen trained hunting dogs will fasten on to a tiger, or a leopard, or the even more dangerous wild boar, with the greatest determination. So esteemed are they that the sporting owner usually receives an official message to keep his dogs in safety when the half-yearly poisoners are about. Still though buffalo fights and mains of cocks have been common in Burma time out of mind, the pariah has never been called upon to develop pugnacious instincts.

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[224]

Be
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The harmless, necessary cat is not so abundant. There are, however, few villages without one or two of them. What becomes of the kittens is a mystery. Perhaps they go wild and take to the woods. Perhaps the pariah eats them when their mother is out foraging. At any rate the fact remains that they increase but very slowly. The Burman cat is

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

The scales come into use again, and the lime weighs two rupees—it is another packet. That night the two rascals are drunk together, and the farmer makes an offering to the nats, persuaded that there is something supernatural in the matter.

Pitch and toss is common enough in Rangoon now, as is also the three-card trick, introductions of Western industry. Pitch and toss is called myauk pan—myauk is the lion and unicorn on the old "Jan Kumpani's" coin, while the pan, the "flower," is the laurel wreath on the other side. Two rupees or pice are spun, and the bystanders call. One says two tails, and if they turn up, he wins double his stake; similarly if he is equally fortunate as to his guess of two heads. If he hedges with a head and tail, he only wins what he laid. The "tossing shilling," and the "lucky penny," of Box and Cox, one of which had no head and the other two, are not by any means novelties in the Pabèdan and other disreputable streets in Rangoon.

Another sleight-of-hand trick at which the town loafers are very skilful and are constantly deluding the unwary, is a performance called kyotothi, tilting at the string. A narrow strip of hide is doubled across, and the doubled end being in the centre, it is wound round and round in a complicated way. Then one of the bystanders is asked to place either his finger or a stick into the centre. The thong is then unwound, and if the man has his finger in the doubled-up end he wins, otherwise the manipulator gathers up the money. It is obvious that manual dexterity may do a great deal in a venture of this kind, and the operator usually makes a good thing of it.

Cock-fighting is also a favourite pastime, and though forbidden by the authorities, is still carried on more or less openly in country villages and quiet streets in the towns. Thibaw's uncle, the deposed Pagān Min, who died of small-pox in 1880, was so fond of the practice that he went by the name of the cock-fighting king. In sporting villages pretty nearly every house has its kyet-hpa, or its taik-kyet, the latter, splendid-looking birds, being bred specially for their pluck in fighting.

Buffalo fights, which used to be great festivals in the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

● 541
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Buffalo fights, which used to be great festivals in the Tenasserim province, especially round about Amherst and Tavoy, have, under the influence of the British Government, almost totally died out. Each village used to have its champion, songs were composed in its honour, and special guards appointed to look after it, and the conqueror brought as much honour to the village as a personal victory of the inhabitants would have done. But they were nearly as brutal exhibitions as Spanish bull-fights, and only a little less dangerous.

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Field sports are barred to all but professional hunters by the religious objection to taking animal life, though when a Burman does enter upon the pursuit, he is always an enthusiastic and skilful sportsman and generally a clever shot.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

the guard dispersed the people. Next day, an old lady, who claimed to be the owner of the dog, visited the big Englishman and told him she forgave him. He was barely polite.

Burmans had no trouble with the pigs and dogs. They found their own countrymen much more awkward to meet. There was constantly some prince or mingyi passing along the streets, and then the road had to be immediately cleared, and every one knelt humbly till the great man passed. Any delay in clearing the path, or an imagined want of reverence in the shikhoing, met with very summary punishment. Before every dignitary rushed along a posse of half-naked lictors, yelling out to the people to bow down, and hitting round about them with their fasces and dahs. These masterful ruffians particularly loved to insult Englishmen. During Mindôn's reign an edict was published exempting Englishmen from the necessity of getting down on their knees in the mud and dust, but ordaining that they should lift their hats. The letyataung dearly loved to launch torrents of abuse at their victim, and make him dismount from his pony and remove his hat when the prince was half a block distant. In the spring of 1880 an English mercantile man was actually bullied into going down on his knees. But, as a rule, where it was possible, foreigners turned down a by-street, or into one of the waste plots of ground. This method of avoiding the annoyance was not open to a Burman. If he tried to avoid paying due obeisance, he was denounced as a disaffected man and thrown into jail.

But there were plenty of other obstructions to be met with in the streets of the royal city. Each householder was considered, or considered himself, perfectly at liberty to do what he pleased with the section of the road in front of his house. Accordingly, when the spirit moved him, he calmly blocked the thoroughfare by erecting a temporary theatre for the performance of a pwè. The construction of such a mandut did not take very long. A framework of bamboo was run up and covered in on the roof, and one side with bamboo matting, and all was ready; the stage was the street, and the spectators deposited themselves where they found room. After the three or four days' performance, the stage was pulled down, and the thoroughfare was clear again.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

361
541 During the season a dozen or more of these plays went on in Mandalay on the same night, and the entire population turned out to see them, thus effectually blocking as many streets as there were performances. This might have been awkward for the ordinary wayfarer were it not that he would probably infinitely prefer staying to see the drama to continuing his journey. Great men were not so complaisant. Two of the massacred princes, the Mekkhaya and the Thonsè, seemed to take a special delight, when they were belated on some roistering expedition, in breaking up such plebeian gatherings. They would come sweeping down the street with all their retinue, and the spectators, deafened by the music and engrossed with the action on the stage, would get their first hint of the torrent coming from the vigorous blows dealt all round about them by the howling lictors. Everything would be disorder and alarm for a time, men and women down in the ditch, the stage deserted, and the spectators scattered far and wide. Then, ten minutes later, they would all come back again; there would be a few remarks concerning his Royal Highness—"very often out at unexpected times, and always making his appearance so suddenly," etc. etc.; the bamboo erection would be propped up again, and the actors continued with the scene as if nothing whatever had happened, though the clown, no doubt, made as much fun out of the incident as he dared.

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625 Going about at night in Mandalay was not much practised. Theatre-goers usually returned home with the rising sun. There were no lamps in the streets, and so every one who had business after dark was required to go about carrying a lantern or beating a drum or gong. If any one ventured abroad without thus marking his movements, he was promptly arrested by the night watch, and once a man was arrested in Mandalay it cost a good deal of money to get free again, no matter how good an account he might be able to give of himself. To save themselves the trouble of being constantly on the look-out as well as to trip up any one who tried to run away, the guardians of the peace had an unpleasant custom of tying ropes across the road an inch or two above the ground, and these were quite as effectual man-traps as have ever been invented.

621
641 remaining huts. They have lists of the people in their charge. Maung Myint and Aung Gyi are under the school-master, who is the most important and influential man of all. These people have to see to the DHANI thatch roof, the bamboo, etc., and if there are any repairs needed they get together, estimate the cost , and then go to the government authorities. U Myaing does not know which office they go to.

621
792 The phongyis resident in the camp do not participate in the secular life of the camp, beyond giving the SILAS and coming occasionally for HSOON. In Pathwe village there were small boys whom they taught - thirty or forty of them, but in camp they do not help to educate the young. People go to these phongyis in camp on holy days, to take the SILAS. They do not even preach to the laity. This U Myaing thinks to be due to the fact that they do not know how to, being themselves refugees from country villages.

796 On the 8th and 15th day of the waxing moon and the 8th and 15th day of the waning moon, the four holy days of the month, Daw Aw Zar goes to the Shwe Dagon to say her prayers. U Myaing cannot do likewise because he has to go to work.

641
621 U Myaing has very little dealing with the government. They do not come for taxes, and in fact even have to provide the refugees with items of food and apparel. The people in the camp are not members of a closely knit organisation. They are made up of workers and families all thrown together by the exigencies of the political situation. The three mentioned above are the only ones in the whole camp. who have charge of the camp welfare. They take the responsibility for disposing of the bucket sewage and the dirt accumulated in and around the camp. They arrange for government sweepers to come for these. There have been no fire drills or any such exercise held in the camp.

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●541 In Rangoon the family has few entertainments. There was once a government film show screened in the camp, and the other night Ma Khin Nyein went with some friends to a nearby pagoda to see a lantern slide show of Buddha's Relics. They have never seen a modern Burmese play or PYAZAT. As Daw Aw Zar expressed it, "How can we go and see one when the charge for admission is a rupee

[435] for an adult and 8 annas for a child."

572 The friendships he[1] has made with other workers do not seem to be
369 very deep or very lasting. In Pathwe the workers were all friends, and even included his relatives as well. There are not many strangers in Pathwe and even people not connected by blood ties were treated like relatives.

369 "In Rangoon the seller takes a profit on everything we have
426 to buy for food; items like rice, vegetables and fruits. Of course
444 he cannot be blamed, because he has a living to earn too. He gives wage-earners goods on credit, but charges an interest on those goods! In Pathwe U Myaing could get most of the necessary food without having to pay any interest or middleman's profits since he bought straight from the producer. In Rangoon all people who earn monthly wages are the same. They have to take goods on credit. Those who do not earn regular salaries are allowed credit, but they have to undertake to settle accounts by a fixed date.

525 During the TAGU month festival, U Myaing gambled for money.
527 He has gambled to stakes as high as three hundred rupees, but never up to one or two thousand. In Pathwe they had this on the PAYA-GYI-DAUNG side, and U Myaing joined in whenever he came across in other villages a group who were playing while on business. When he was young he gambled away Rs. 700/- while on a trip to KYANGIN. They were all of them on the same boat and he lost that amount at DaNUBYU. But by the time they reached YANGOON he had recovered his money. The games they played were poker and HO-HEK.

525 In their village they had people who held fights between game
●541 cocks. U Myaing never bred any of these fowls but he has placed bets on them several times, small bets to the value of four or five rupees. There is no special announcement made but word gets around that there is to be a match at such and such a place on such and such a day, and at the appointed time the villagers who are interested all congregate at that spot.

There are bookmakers among the assembled villagers who are willing to take any bets on either side. Cock fighting is carried on during the months of PYATHO and TABAUNG. And even then they have it during only four or five days in the month. U Myaing does not go to every meeting. In the rainy the ground is wet for game cock-fighting

1 [i.e., U Myaing -- ANALYST]

So the worship of the nats lived on, and with the advance of
795 civilization the spirit dances became elaborate, for though the belief
535 was primitive, the people were no longer so. The dances benefited from the developments that had taken place in Burmese music which, as we have seen, flourished under the patronage of the Pagan kings. New spirits were added, and they were usually those of heroic princes. The dancers were now many, for the mediums turned themselves into dancing and music mistresses. The chief medium of each spirit dressed herself in the special dress of the spirit, but the junior mediums, who were equivalent to the chorus of an English revue, were in the dress of Burmese princesses. It is interesting to note the
[292] origin of this dress. The mediums realized the necessity of dressing
[565] themselves in fine raiment, but as everybody wore clothes of bright colours, the only solution of the problem was to don the dress of the court and official class, which the commoners were forbidden to
[536] wear by law, except during feasts and dances. When drama proper came into being, the hero and the heroine dressed themselves in the court dress, even when they were representing common characters.

3. Miracles and Interludes

175 After the fall of the kingdom of Pagan in A.D. 1257, Burma was
369 the scene of fierce civil wars, but the trouble was mainly in the
726 capitals; in the villages and small towns life went on in its joyous
779 way. Religion continued to spread in spite of the fact that the throne
538 of Pagan was no longer in existence to support it. Learning began to reach the remotest parts of the country, carried far and near by monks. To escape from the aimless strife of the civil wars, men turned towards literature. Money was lacking to compose poems in brick as had been done at Pagan, and men now expressed their love for the religion and their love for the beautiful in writing. The new literature further educated the people and made even stronger the already strong religious fervour. As a result, at village feasts and on days of public rejoicing, the people turned towards their religion for amusement and entertainment. So pageants depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha and from his Birth Stories came into being.

796 Pageants were given on ordinary carts that were in use for all
541 kinds of transport and which are still in use in backward parts of the
493 country at the present day. Each cart carried a group of (amateur) actors standing still and representing a set scene. Originally, no doubt, there were only a few carts representing scenes from different stories. Later, a pageant came to consist of many carts and many

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1957 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

scenes. Still later, the scenes came to be taken from one story only, so that a whole story was given by the pageant. Dresses became quite gorgeous and the scheme elaborate. The pageant now needed organization. Therefore, the village came to be divided into two parts, eastern and western quarters or northern and southern quarters (the village was usually greater in length than breadth, being built along a main road). In larger villages and towns, the division was into four quarters. Each quarter was responsible for the production of a pageant. There was intense rivalry between the quarters to produce the finest pageant; it was usually friendly, but often enmity arose, and many pageants were occasions for free fights. The rivalry further developed the pageant, for new ideas would be introduced by one quarter to outrival the others. Soon the pageant became a play, its scenes coming to life.

The *Nibhatkhin* was the Burmese equivalent of the English miracle and mystery plays. It was the pageant come to life. With the pageant, the religious processions went along the main streets without stopping, each cart representing a set scene. But with the *Nibhatkhin*, each cart stopped at certain places. The most common of such places were the market-place, the house of the chief administrative officer, and the pagoda where the procession ended. At each of those places, each cart stopped, and the scene came to life. Dialogue and action were used. Therefore, people at the stopping places saw what was in effect a play.

The *Nibhatkhin* was extremely popular, and it lived on until recently, just as many of the English miracle plays continued to be produced right through the Elizabethan period. I saw one in the out-of-the-way town of Pauk as recently as 1916. However, I do not think that *Nibhatkhins* are produced anywhere nowadays. Sometimes one sees a procession on cars and motor lorries as a sort of reminiscence of the *Nibhatkhin*. But such processions are mere shows and lack the essential features of the Burmese miracle plays.

It was for the entertainment of the populace that the *Nibhatkhin* came into being, and as the Burmese entertainment connotes laughter, soon the element of humour came into the *Nibhatkhin*. At first none of the characters was made humorous, for they all came out of religious stories. And so the clown was introduced. The clown or *Lu-byet* ('the non-serious man') was put into the *Nibhatkhin* as an extra character, an attendant on the prince-hero. He was extremely popular, and soon another clown, an attendant on the princess-heroine,

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1980) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

536* 535 appear at all, and the song had lost its importance to such an extent that only one scene in all his plays had songs, which was in *Dayuzgoukan*, where the hermit and the two princesses spoke to each other in songs. Though U Pon Nya was a great writer of songs, not one appeared in his plays. These great dramatists, through their brilliance, made the audience interested in the play alone, and the professional actors had no choice but to follow the dictates of the famous playwrights. After U Pon Nya, through lack of interest in true drama and because there were no able dramatists, the drama fell again into the hands of the professional actors, who had always considered themselves dancers and singers. They continued to present the great plays and their imitations, but only as frameworks for their songs and dances. We shall see later that after the final flicker of the drama during the years 1877–86 it perished in the hands of the actors with their interest in song and dance.

536* ●541 178 [171] The people themselves wanted song and dance. They wanted an entertainment pleasing to the eye and the ear, without taxing the brain. They wanted an escape from the realities of life, because they were weary of the present and anxious for the future, as they knew not what dreadful events the next few months would bring. They wanted new dances and new tunes, and they applauded elaborate dresses and brilliantly staged scenes; and the actors could give them what they wanted as, through the influence of English and French touring companies, the stage scenery and devices had developed by leaps and bounds.[1] They demanded both laughter and tears, but as they desired the drama to appeal only to their senses and not to the intellect, what they really wished for and received were farce and sentimental pathos. The spirit of the audience had changed since the days of the great dramatists. The drama came into being in the age of triumph, when the attitude of the audience towards life was one of serenity and optimism. During U Kyin U's time, disaster, in the shape of the loss of provinces to the British, had overtaken the country, but there seemed to be a promise of better times, and therefore the spirit of the nation was still serene. When U Pon Nya wrote his plays, more provinces had been lost to the British, but again there was a promise of better times, and the spirit of the audience remained calm and serene. But after U Pon Nya, the spirit was one of despair and anxiety.

[1] The development of the stage is considered in detail in chap. vii.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

526 a mile to a mile. Popular diversions, common to Burmans and Europeans, are the race meetings, with their kindred accompaniments.

The boat-races are held at the *Thadin-dyut* festival (p. 184). Racing-canoes are forty to sixty feet long and only wide enough for one man; they are lacquered inside and out (No. 430). The canoe is paddled by a crew of eight to twenty.

[541]

400. COCK-FIGHTING.

Competing crews generally belong to different villages, which causes excitement to run high and heavy wagers to be laid. The goal is a boat moored in the river, athwart of which is fixed a long bamboo (*pait*).[1] Through the hollow of the latter runs a loose rattan, projecting a hand-breadth at each end. The bow-hands make a dash for this rattan, and the boat that secures it is the winner. Burmans are excellent swimmers, which they need to be for these races, as the canoes are commonly swamped at the goal; but they have no swimming contests.

541 Bullock racing is a favourite sport in parts of southern Pegu. Some trouble is taken with breeding the animals and training them to trot fast. In the race they go at a gallop over a course of about half a mile.

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401. CHINLON GAME.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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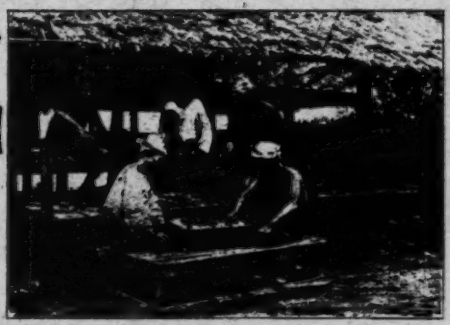

●541

403. CHESS.

Slashing cocoanuts (*ôuhbôt*) is a favourite sport in the North. A green cocoanut is balanced on the top of another, and has to be severed in two across the fibre at a blow of the sabre. This requires both power and knack. The villagers bet on who will sever the greatest number without a miss.

Cock-fighting is condemned by the popular religion, together with everything that causes pain or inflames the passions. Nevertheless, the people are greatly addicted to it; they bet heavily on their birds. A large long-legged fowl of the Shanghai type is bred for fighting. The Talaings in the South are fond of making bulls fight, especially bull buffaloes.

526 The every-day outdoor sport of Burma is the *chinlôn* game. A light springy ball is made of five interlacing circles of split rattan, four or five in a tier, with large open interspaces. The object is to keep the ball up, and the only rule is that the ball may not be touched with the hand. The nearest player advances to meet it, and if he be a tyro, he is content to kick the ball up; there are no turns. A good player will send the ball into the air again and again with decreasing force till he allows it to alight in the hollow of his shoulder. Thence he lets it roll down the back of the arm and jerks it off at the elbow to catch it on the knee, and, changing his foot like a flash, strikes the ball high from the back, with the opposite sole, for another player to vary the performance in as original a way as he can (Nos. 160, 162). The game implies a perfect command of every muscle. Players are not at their best till twenty-five or thirty. There can be no winning in this game, which is played for the pure love of skill.

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404. DOMINOES.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 . APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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408. CHINESE DICE (NIDAUNG).

ment associated with sot (*myet-thauk*), next after which is *beinza* —opium-eater. Women do not often play chess or cards; they have a game called *pasit* (beetle-fight), somewhat resembling back-gammon.

Games of pure hazard are in great favour, especially at festival times. Chinese and Shan settlers start gambling-dens for the dissolute youth, with Chinese dice (*Nidaung, Angalôn*, No. 406), and the thirty-six animal lottery (*tí, thônzè-chaukkaung kazá*), symbols intelligible to every nation and the meanest capacity. For *angalôn* there is a paper or cloth with compartments for six different figures of animals on which money is staked, corresponding to similar figures on a wooden cube, which is shaken in a box.

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The showmen in Burma are the conjuror and the snake-charmer. The Burman juggler (*myet-hlè sayá*) makes no pretence of occult powers, not even to children. His name implies that his movements "elude the eye;" but his legerdemain does not attain to the art of the Indian and Chinese jugglers. The snake-charmer, on the other hand (*dlanbè sayá*), pretends to be protected by magic. He is tattooed all over with snakes; he has slits at the side of his tongue which he shows, and in other ways he plays upon credulity. It has been alleged that the snake-men inoculate themselves with the venom, but this is not authenticated, though it is known from the experiments of Calmette and Fraser that immunity can be produced in this way. The cobra (*mwye-hauk*) is exhibited, but only when the hamadryad (*ngan-bôk*), a much larger species of the same family, cannot be procured (p. 96). The snakes are exhibited in their natural

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409. BURMAN JUGGLER.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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410. THE CHARMER APPROACHING THE SNAKE.

state; the fascination of the show is the danger. But as soon as the snake is unmolested it glides away harmlessly; no one feels any apprehension from its proximity, the moment the showman ceases to tease the snake. A cobra is easy to find, but it may take months to discover a hamadryad. The creature is tracked by the trail it leaves in the sand of a dry stream or the dust of a road to the place where it is watching its eggs. At this time, if ever, the snake is aggressive. But like the rest of the cobra family, its movements are comparatively slow; the charmer's hand is quicker, the snake is captured and consigned to the basket before it can strike. After that it is handled with impunity. There is no sort of training; the charmers say that the snake may be shown the same day that it is caught. When the snake is set at large, it appears to be bluffed by the performer, and made to execute feints of attack corresponding to the feints of the charmer, who keeps time to music, and so creates the impression that the snake is swaying—"dancing"—to the sound. The snakes are difficult to feed and keep in condition. They are let go after a month or two, in the hope of catching them again; the charmer vows to release the snake after a definite term, and has a superstition that if he keeps faith the snake will not hurt him.

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The Burmese festivals have been described as being confined to a single one, which begins in April and goes on to the following March. But that is an exaggeration. There are two regular carnivals of a week or ten days each, and several others of a couple of days' duration, besides occasional festivities to celebrate the completion of *zeds* and temples,—and last, but not least, the

411. THE HAMADRYAD CAPTURED.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

412. SNAKE-CHARMER'S PERFORMANCE.

cremation of the *yahán*. Burmese New-Year—moon-change at *Tagú*—falls in April, as the sun enters the sign of Aries. The calendar has been regulated on the Brahman model with intercalary days and months (Appendix E). New-Year marks the greatest crisis in the seasons; the heat has reached its climax, to drop abruptly at the break of the south-west monsoon. Now is the time of drought; many of the wells are empty, and water has to be fetched from a distance. There is no greater luxury than abundance of water at this season; water is the most seasonable offering, and great supplies are stored in the jars at the *kyaungs*. In a symbolic spirit, water is poured over the images of the Buddha. But the great feature of the New-Year festival is the burlesque of these libations. In the true spirit of the carnival, the women douse the men, and the men douse the women, all regardless of their festal attire. The young women in particular wait in ambush for the gallants, perhaps to be caught in a second ambush by some urchin. The liberty of water-throwing lasts for the days of *akyó*, *akyá*, *akyát*, and *atét*, the stages of the journey which a *thadyá* makes from heaven to earth to see the works of men if they be good. The legend is probably derived from the Hindu myth of the rain-god Indra, to whom water is offered at the season of his expected descent. A religious feature of the festival is the ransom of cattle. An animal kept for slaughter by the Indian Musulman butcher is borrowed and gaily decked out, with its horns gilded. It is led round the village or quarter of the town, followed by a festive throng, and contributions are gathered until the price of the animal is made up, when it is set free at the *kyaung* to be an evidence of goodwill to all things living.

413. NEW-YEAR FETE (PAYA-YE-CHO).